

Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER



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A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

The Latest on Skills Now

Communities in several regions of B.C. will gain improved access to adult basic education opportunities under government initiatives announced this summer.

The initiatives are part of the Skills Now program, announced on May 3, 1994 by Premier Mike Harcourt and Skills, Training and Labour Minister Dan Miller. The program will invest \$200 million over the next two years in a new skills training plan for high school and post-secondary students, workers and the unemployed.

As one component of the program, in an effort to "retrain workers closer to home," the government will establish 10 Community Skills Centres (CSC's) in remote, underserved areas of the province.

By using computers, on-line databases, teleconferencing and other telecommunications methods, the centres will increase access to training resources not available in the community. The centres will serve as clearinghouses for up-to-date job training and job-related opportunities, and refer learners to training providers, child-care, tutors, assessment counselling and employment agencies.

The centres will be located in existing facilities such as schools, libraries and colleges.

CSC's involve partnerships between the federal and provincial governments, local business, labour, and education groups, including community colleges.

To date, CSC's have been announced for Kitimat, Sparwood, Kimberley, Dawson Creek, Port Alberni, and Port Hardy.

Alanna Schlatter, Manager, Academic Programs and Open Learning, Universities and Provincial Institutes Branch, Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, says the CSC's are "community-driven initiatives" that will identify local needs for training and retraining programs. She says "there will likely be a need for delivery of ABE at these Centres. The Centres will broker through either the local community college or other providers, depending on requirements."

Some highlights of CSC's planned to date:

❖ The East Kootenay region will be served by two CSC's, one in Sparwood, expected to open this year, and a second Centre planned for Kimberley. Both sites were chosen "because of

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Remember, anyone
can get literacy
information by looking
under LEARN in the
new Yellow Pages™

"Skills Now" from page 1

their central locations for serving the economically diverse communities of the east Kootenays."

❖ Sparwood was chosen as a site for a CSC because it "is in a region that has been subject to mine closures, market changes and job losses."

❖ In Kitimat, the CSC is being developed through a 13-member partnership that involves the federal and provincial governments, Kitimat business, labour, First Nations groups, and education and training institutions. It is expected to open in September 1995.

Another Skills Now initiative is the \$50,000 funding for the West Kootenay Telecommunications Consortium, comprised of Selkirk College, and the school districts of Arrow Lakes, Castlegar, Grand Forks, Kettle Valley, Nelson and Trail. The consortium will prepare a needs assessment to develop an electronic learning network for students in the region. The electronic learning network will connect schools, libraries and

post-secondary institutions with the CSC's in Sparwood and Kimberley.

Construction of two new community college campuses, both to include ABE, is also part of the Skills Now initiative:

❖ In Creston, a new \$1.4 million campus for East Kootenay Community College will include a computer lab for ABE programs, as well as classrooms, offices and a learning resource centre. The new Creston Campus Centre, which will replace the existing leased facility, is expected to open in the fall of 1995.

❖ In Houston, a new campus of Northwest Community College, now under construction, will include facilities for a full range of ABE programs, as well as office careers, career exploration, and readiness and skills upgrading programs. The new Houston Campus Centre is expected to open in January 1995.

❖ In Prince George, an expansion and renovation project at the College of New Caledonia will provide more classrooms, including space for ABE.

The government has established a provincial toll-free telephone number to answer questions and provide an overview of Skills Now.

Phone: 1-800-63-SKILL ☐

"Take 5 and Read" on International Literacy Day

B.C. public libraries and community groups will join other agencies across Canada again this year by participating in the second annual "Take 5 and Read" campaign on September 8, 1994, International Literacy Day.

The public awareness campaign urges every Canadian to "Stop what they're doing...pick up a book, newspaper, anything...and READ."

The B.C. Library Association and Literacy B.C. plan to produce "Take 5 and Read" information kits which will be distributed throughout B.C. by mid-August. The kits will contain posters, bookmarks and suggestions for International Literacy Day activities.

Additional sponsors for the campaign include: Frontier College, InterLINK Literacy Working Group, Library Services Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Housing, and the Vancouver Public Library.

For more information, contact:

Thomas Quigley, Librarian
Branch Head
Joe Fortes Library
830 Denman Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6G 2L8
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"Literacy and the Printed Word" Festival

A number of groups representing Vancouver's literary and publishing communities are investigating the possibility of holding a public festival "in celebration of literacy and the printed word" in Vancouver in the fall of 1995.

The event would be patterned after a similar festival called "Word on the Street," held since 1990 in Toronto. The festival is held annually on the last Sunday in September when several city blocks in the downtown core are closed off for the event.

The event brings together publishers, booksellers, writers, and organizations such as libraries, literacy and community groups into the street surrounded by exhibitors' booths, publishing and writing displays, and entertainment.

In Vancouver, representatives of publishers, booksellers, libraries, literacy and community groups have been meeting since January 1994 to discuss the feasibility of mounting a Vancouver Word on the Street festival in September 1995. The Word on the Street (WOTS) national organization in Toronto has applied to the Publishers Distribution Assistance Program for funding

for the Vancouver event.

Plans for a Vancouver festival might include such events as:

- ❖ a celebrity reading tent
- ❖ a Canada Post author's tent
- ❖ an interactive writer's area providing, for example, "hands-on" editing services
- ❖ a variety of readings and musical entertainment for the family

Venues under consideration for the festival include Granville Island, Robson Street, Main Street, Fourth Avenue, and Commercial Drive.

For further information, contact:

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British Columbia
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Students for Literacy to meet in Toronto

A national conference to bring together college and university students from across Canada who are working to improve literacy in their communities will take place September 8 - 11, 1994 in Toronto.

The conference is sponsored by the Frontier College "Students for Literacy" Program. Frontier College is a national, non-profit, volunteer-based literacy organization. The College has been assisting people to improve their reading and writing skills since 1899.

Students for Literacy, a national initiative of Frontier College started in 1992, assists students in organizing student-run literacy programs on college and university campuses.

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The Adult Literacy Contact Centre is a project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour; and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving your literacy news by phone, fax or mail. We reserve the right to edit written submissions for the newsletter.

The newsletter is published monthly (except as noted). It is available free of charge to any individual or agency upon request.



There are three Students for Literacy programs currently active in B.C.: at Simon Fraser University; the University of British Columbia; and the University of Victoria.

Representatives from two of the programs (UBC and University of Victoria) will attend the conference.

Organizers expect about 100 participants from about 20 "Students for Literacy" programs across Canada to attend.

At the conference, participants will discuss a national planning strategy for Frontier College; academic theory and "community" topics; and issues concerning the Students for Literacy network. There will also be readings by learners.

The guest speaker is Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, a former boxer who was wrongly imprisoned, and subsequently wrote an autobiography, which motivated a Toronto youth to learn to read.

While primarily for "Students for Literacy" participants, the conference is open to all.

For further information, contact:

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Students for Literacy
Frontier College
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Toronto, Ontario
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Fax: (416) 323-3522 ☐

NEW RESOURCE

Test Taking: A Guide to Test Taking

Test Taking: Instructor Guide

These complementary publications were developed by SkillPlan, a program of the B.C. Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council.

The first is a manual for participants in SkillPlan's test taking workshops, which "are designed to provide trades training classes with additional skills they need to prepare for and write a test."

SkillPlan developed these workshops to meet the needs of people in construction trades unions and their employers. For example, some workers may be required to write a Trades Qualification exam, others an Interprovincial exam or an apprenticeship test. Other participants may take the workshop to prepare for tests they may have to write in the future.

The 14-page *A Guide to Test Taking*, written in plain language, reviews the basic skills that students need to pass a test, such as organizing material and planning how to study. It covers studying techniques, such as how to read and remember, how to summarize material in your own

words, and how to repeat material out loud to yourself or someone else. Tips on answering multiple choice questions are also included.

The *Instructor Guide* is a manual written for the trades trainer and the adult educator, to accompany the participant manual. The guide outlines the process of planning, developing and delivering the test taking workshop.

In Part II of the guide, "Delivering the Workshop," an example of advice to the student is, "*Take charge of comfort levels. Suffering is optional. Stand or walk around when chairs become uncomfortable. Ask the facilitator to slow down....or speed up!*" In a section on multiple choice test strategies, students are advised that, "*There are no marks for arguing. Accept mistakes in questions and mark the BEST answer. Stay calm. Tell the instructor after the exam is over so that some day that question may be changed.*"

Both guides are available at nominal cost from:

SkillPlan
B.C. Construction Industry Skills
Improvement Council
4303 Canada Way
Burnaby, B.C.
V5G 1J3
Phone: 526-8020
Fax: 526-8070
Victoria Office Fax/Phone: 388-9530